

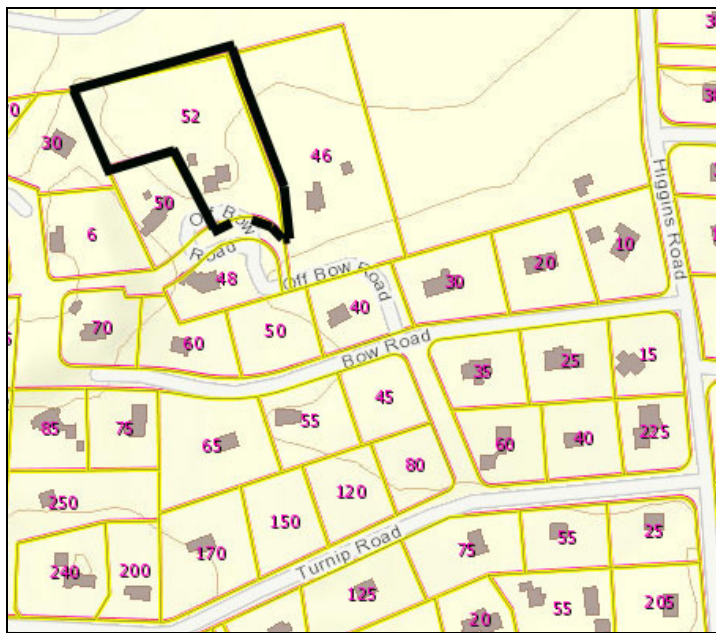
FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Photograph



Locus Map (north at top)



Recorded by: Larson Fisher Associates, Inc. with Kathryn Grover

Organization: Eastham Historical Commission

Date: May 2013

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

4-454

ORLEANS

EAS.587

Town/City: Town of Eastham

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): North Eastham

Address: 52 Bow Road Rear

Historic Name: James E. Murphy Cottage

Uses: Present: single-family residence

Original: single-family residence

Date of Construction: c. 1950

Source: Visual analysis & 1952 site plan

Style/Form: Cape Cod

Architect/Builder: undetermined

Exterior Material:

Foundation: concrete block

Wall/Trim: wood shingles

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: garage/shed

Major Alterations (*with dates*): offset ell on right side (1974)

Condition: good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 1.18 acres

Setting: The subject property is on a small private cul-de-sac north of Bow Road proper. It is surrounded by other single family residences, though the large property to the north is listed as a Mixed Use/Chpt. 61 by the Assessor.

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☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

The house on the subject property clearly does not date to 1876 as indicated by the Eastham Assessor, but is rather a c. 1950 Cape Cod-style dwelling with a concrete block foundation.¹ The original section is four bays wide and three deep, has a gable roof and a brick center chimney. The front facade is asymmetrically organized with two six-over-six windows to the left of the front entry; one six-over-six window is to the right of the front entry. All the windows appear to be original, as does the paneled front door with small window. In 1974 a large 24-by-26-foot offset ell (recessed from the front facade and projecting behind the rear facade) was added to the right side of the original dwelling.² It too has a gable roof but is only one bay wide with an oriel/bay window on its front facade; it is three bays deep like the main block. The ell also has a brick chimney, but at its northwest corner. Behind the house is a wood deck that wraps to the rear of the ell. The house and ell have white-painted corner boards and trim and are clad with weathered wood shingles.

A small 1950s detached garage with swing doors and a front gable roof is located to the rear and left (northwest) of the house. It no longer functions as a garage (no driveway leads to it) and is now considered a shed. It has three windows on its left (west) side. Although the private road leading into this circle of residences is unimproved, the driveway into this lot and a parking pad in front of the ell is paved (blacktopped). The lot is fairly open though mature deciduous and coniferous trees are numerous throughout this residential area.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Deeds for the house at 52 Bow Road Rear cannot be traced earlier than 1917, when Harriet E. Newman Higgins sold the property to farm laborer George Williams. The deed does not mention the existence of buildings, and the 1880 and 1905 maps do not show a house on this site (though the 1905 map appears to show few houses on the outskirts of the main area of development in Eastham). Indeed, visual analysis indicates that the present house dates to the mid-20th century.

Harriet E. N. Higgins was the wife of Russell S. Higgins (1826-1926), the son of Josiah K. and Hannah Snow Higgins; he lived in North Eastham for most of his life. In the early 1850s he left Cape Cod to learn bootmaking in North Bridgewater and became a night watchman there for some time; the 1855 state census shows him in that town. In 1865 he married Harriet E. Newman of Eastport, Maine, and their first five children were born in Maine between 1866 and 1876. By 1878 the family had returned to North Eastham and bought a house earlier owned by Obed Knowles (1766-1833).³ In 1880 Russell Higgins was working as a fisherman, but late in his life he turned to farming.

In August 1917 Higgins's wife Harriet sold three acres of the family's North Eastham property, with two rights-of-way over her land (one to Campground Road), to George Williams, who had bought two acres of undeveloped land from Russell Higgins in 1913. Almost nothing is known about Williams, who is enumerated in the 1920 census after Russell and Harriet Higgins in a household by himself; he was single, sixty-eight years old, and a native of Connecticut. In 1925 Williams sold the property, now shown as land and buildings, to James E. Murphy of Hartford, Connecticut; he and later his siblings owned the Bow Road property until 1955.⁴

James E. Murphy was born in Philadelphia in 1878 the son of insurance agent James J. Murphy and his wife Catherine. Both of his parents had emigrated from Ireland between 1865 and 1875, and by 1900 James E. Murphy was working as a post office clerk and living in his parents' household. He may have gone to college at Notre Dame University and by 1912 he had earned a medical degree and an appointment as resident physician at Mount Alto State Tuberculosis Sanitarium in Pennsylvania. In 1913 he assumed the same post at Wildwood Sanitarium in Newington, Connecticut, part of Hartford Hospital. He was resident physician there until the facility closed in July 1939, and he died in November of the same year.⁵ Murphy never married, and in his will he left the North Eastham property to his brothers and half-sisters.⁶

In December 1947 Murphy's sister Helen sold her one-fifth interest in the Bow Road property to J. Donald Clair of Palisade, New Jersey, the husband of their sister Kathryn. All of the other Murphy heirs subdivided the property in 1952 and sold their interests

¹ Reputedly, per neighbor Art Stewart, there was a much earlier house sited in the northern section of the larger property from which the 52 Bow Rd. Rear parcel was created but it was razed prior to development of the present homes. The 1952 subdivision plan (see below) depicts the house with its original footprint and garage/shed. The house and garage appear to be accurately dated as 1950 by the Eastham Assessor.

² Town of Eastham records, building permit #61 issued in 1974. (A building permit issued Nov. 3, 2005, also noted as for an "addition" was actually for the finishing of the second floor space in the ell.)

³ That Higgins bought the Obed Knowles house is stated in Charles Thornton Libby, "The Knowles Family of Eastham, Mass.," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 80 (January 1926): 8.

⁴ Harriet E. N. Higgins to George Williams, 9 August 1917, Barnstable County Registry of Deeds (hereafter cited as BCD) 355:150; George Williams to James E. Murphy, Hartford CT, 6 June 1925, BCD 413:58.

⁵ "Dr. James E. Murphy: Tuberculosis Authority was Sanitarium Aide 26 Years," *New York Times*, 1 November 1939; *Journal of the American Medical Association* 61, 2 (15 November 1913): 1822.

⁶ Affidavit of William R. Murphy, 24 October 1959, BCD 1058:242

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in the parcel containing 52 Bow Road Rear to Helmi H. Frazier of Wellfleet in 1952. In 1953 Frazier deeded that parcel back to Kathryn G. and J. Donald Clair and Kathleen M. Clair, probably their daughter.⁷

Only two years later, in 1955, the Clairs sold the property to George E. and Ena S. Glasson of Gardner, whose family owned the property until 2000. Born in 1917 in Orange, George Edward Glasson worked as a credit manager for Collier-Keyworth Company, which manufactured go-karts, baby carriages, and hardware for baby carriages and chairs. In 1967 Glasson further subdivided the Bow Road property. He died in 1996 at the age of seventy-eight, and in 2000 his widow sold 52 Bow Road Rear to current owners Charles Klein and Kimberly McCall of the Boston suburb of Chestnut Hill.⁸

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SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES

⁷ Helen F. Murphy, Upper Darby PA, to J. Donald Clair, Palisade NJ, 13 December 1947, BCD 685:527; James J. Murphy, Philadelphia; Regina M. Murphy, Upper Darby PA; Kathryn G. Clair and J. Donald Clair, Palisade, NJ, to Helmi H. Frazier, Wellfleet, 1 August 1952, BCD 828:143; Helmi H. Frazier, Wellfleet, to Kathryn G. Clair, J. Donald Clair, and Kathleen M. Clair, Palisade NJ, 8 May 1953, BCD 841:143. See also "Subdivision of Land in Eastham Mass. Property of the Heirs of James E. Murphy," August 1952, Barnstable County Registry of Deeds Plan (hereafter cited as BCP) 106:153.

⁸ Kathryn G. Clair, J. Donald Clair, and Kathleen M. Clair, Palisade NJ, to George E. and Ena S. Glasson, Gardner, 31 July 1955, BCD 917:48; Ena S. Glasson to Charles Klein and Kimberly McCall, Chestnut Hill, 16 June 2000, BCD 13077:127. See also "Subdivision Plan of Land in Eastham (North), Mass. As Prepared for George E. Glasson et us (Ena S.)," November 1967, BCP 249:37.

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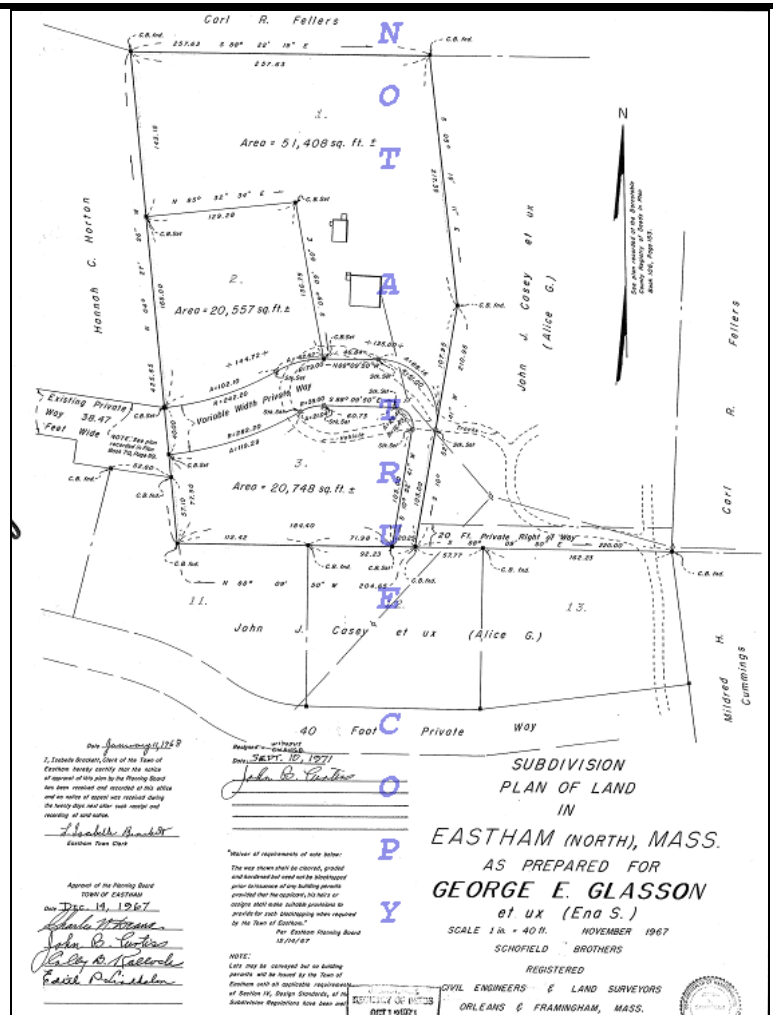
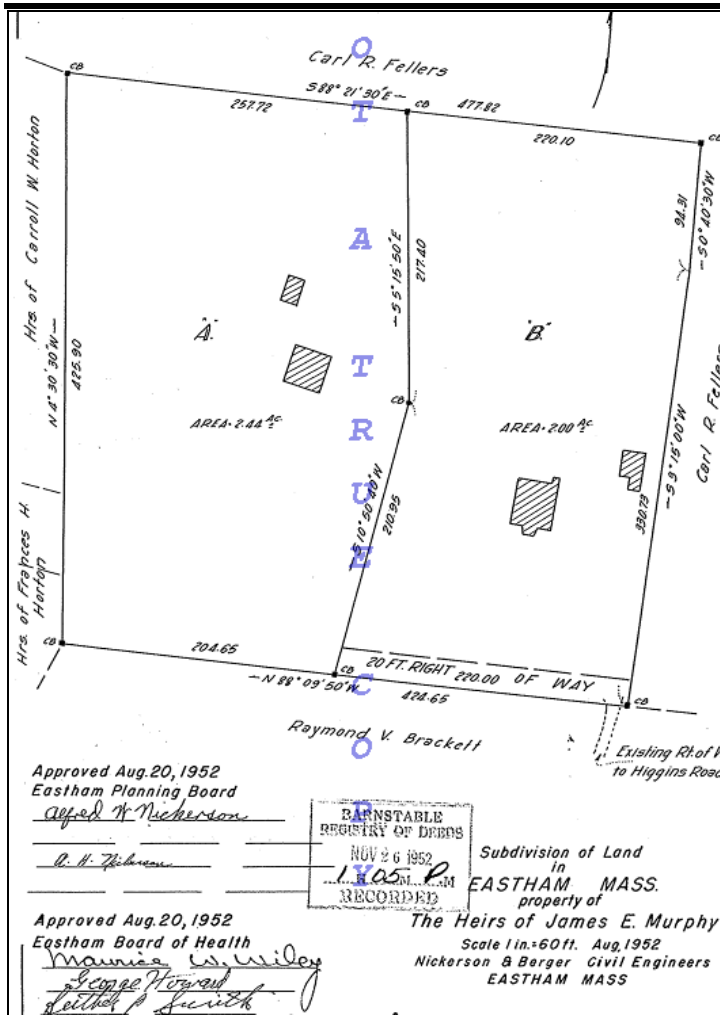
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LEFT: The Murphy heirs subdivision plan of 1952 (BCP 106:153); Parcel A is 52 Bow Road Rear. RIGHT: The Glasson subdivision of 1967; 52 Bow Road Rear is Parcel 1.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

(credit Larson Fisher Associates, 2012-2013 unless otherwise noted)



View from southwest.



View from southeast.